



Good afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today.

My name is Scott Ellis, Executive Director of the Michigan Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA).

I am here today on behalf of the MLBA and Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) to testify in opposition to HB4935. This bill will increase fines on liquor licenses in the State of Michigan. As you know, most holders of liquor licenses are small family-owned businesses. They work hard every day to keep their small business open and do everything possible to comply with all state and federal regulations.

The members of the MLBA and the MRA strive to promote the safety of their patrons and the public. Our members realize that there is a large responsibility that comes with serving alcohol. That is why they participate in educational programs such as our server training program, Techniques of Alcohol Management. They pay to train their staff on the rules, laws and moral responsibilities of serving alcohol.

According to the current statute, "The commission or any commissioner or duly authorized agent of the commission designated by the chairperson of the commission, upon due notice and proper hearing, may **SUSPEND OR REVOKE** any license upon a violation of this act or any of the rules promulgated by the commission under this act."

This portion of the current statute clearly allows the commission to enforce the harshest of penalties on a license as necessary.

The MLBA and MRA believe that education and enforcement are the best ways to address any issues that this bill claims to address. As a retired law enforcement officer, I realize there needs to be a balance between enforcement, penalties and education. In many situations high fines have only created revenue for government agencies and have not reduced any problems that the increased fines were meant to address.

So I ask this committee to think about the negative effects HB4935 would have on approximately 17,200 liquor licenses in the State of Michigan. The MLBA and MRA would encourage education along with enforcement instead of hitting small businesses in the pocket book.

I'd like to thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee members, for taking the time to listen to all of us today.